



Keeping
Safe

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In Case of a Medical Emergency

A medical emergency is a serious medical condition from an injury, sickness, or mental illness. A medical emergency is sudden, severe, and needs treatment right away.

If your child has a medical emergency, call 911 or go to the emergency room at the nearest hospital right away.

Some examples of medical emergencies are when your child:

- Has a hard time breathing or is choking
- Has been badly hurt
- Loses consciousness (passes out)
- Has convulsions or seizures
- Has a lot of vomiting that will not stop
- Has a lot of bleeding that will not stop
- Feels sudden, severe, or unusual pain or pressure
- Has had a serious fall, car accident, or blow to the head
- Is trying to harm himself or herself, or harm others

If you think your child may have swallowed something poisonous, first call the **Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222**. Keep this number close to your telephones.

Try to stay calm. When you call 911 or the Poison Control Center, be prepared to give:

- Your child's age
- Your child's weight
- Your child's temperature
- A description of the problem
- The address where you are and the phone number

Do not hang up the phone first, in case more information is needed.

If you do use the hospital emergency room:

- Be prepared to wait
- Bring your child's health insurance plan number
- Bring your child's immunization record

Remember to call and tell your child's doctor about the emergency after the visit.

You can help prepare for a medical emergency before one happens.

- Talk to your child's doctor or nurse about what to do when an emergency happens.
- Learn about your child's health plan's policies for emergency room visits.
- Clearly mark your house or apartment number. Then, an ambulance can easily find your home, even in the dark.
- Learn CPR and first aid.
- Put a first aid kit together and out of your child's reach. Include:
 - ➡ Bandages
 - ➡ Cotton balls
 - ➡ Scissors
 - ➡ Antiseptic spray or ointment
 - ➡ Thermometer
 - ➡ Children's pain reliever, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen
 - ➡ Tweezers
 - ➡ Gauze

Never give your child aspirin unless your doctor tells you to.

Preventing Falls

Falls are the biggest cause of injury to children under the age of five.

- Do not ever leave a baby alone—even a newborn—on a changing table, bed, chair, sofa, or any furniture.
- If you cannot hold him, put your baby in a playpen, on the floor, on a blanket, or in an infant seat. Put infant seats on the floor only.
- Make sure you strap your child into high chairs, changing tables, grocery carts, and other seats that he could fall from.
- Baby walkers are dangerous. They are not recommended.

When your baby starts crawling and walking, he can fall down the stairs. **Install safety gates at stairways and at open patio doors.**

Many children fall out of windows each year. **Window screens do not protect your baby from a fall.** Prevent your child from falling:

- Lock all closed windows.
- Open windows from the top, not the bottom.
- **Install window guards at all windows above the first floor.** Make sure they are the kind that can be opened in case of an emergency.

Safety gates, window guards, and safety latches can be bought at hardware and discount stores.

Preventing Scalds and Burns

In case of a burn:

- Cool a burn by running it under cool water for 10-15 minutes.
- Call your doctor.
- Do not put anything on the burn unless your doctor tells you to.

In the kitchen:

- Keep hot food and drinks away from the edges of tables and counters.
- Never carry hot food and drinks near your child, or while holding him.
- When cooking, keep your child away from the stove.
- Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Use the back burners when possible.
- Always test your child's heated food or drink. If you use a microwave oven, stir the food and test it before serving. Microwaves heat unevenly.
- **Never heat bottles in the microwave.**

In the bathroom:

- Set your water heater to 120°F or less. If you rent, ask your landlord to set the temperature no higher than 120°F.
- Always check the water before putting your child in the tub.
- Do not leave your child alone in the bath—even for a moment. She may turn on the hot water or drown.

To prevent electrical burns, make sure to cover all electrical outlets.

Fire Safety

Protect your family from fires:

- **Install smoke alarms** in sleeping areas and in every level of your home. Landlords are required by law to provide them. **Make sure smoke alarms work right.**
 - ☐ Test them on the first day of each month.
 - ☐ Do not take the batteries out of them.
 - ☐ Put in new batteries twice a year.
 - ☐ Replace smoke alarms every 10 years.
- **Keep matches and lighters out of sight and reach.**
- Teach your child that matches and lighters are for adults and are not toys.
- It is safer to keep bedroom doors closed when sleeping. A closed door will help hold back deadly smoke.

Teach your family what to do in case of a fire:

- **Crawl on the ground.** The best air is close to the ground. If clothes catch fire — **STOP, DROP** to the ground, and **ROLL** to put out the flames. Cover your face with your hands.
- Cool burns with water only.
- Get out of the house fast, and stay out.
- Call the fire department from a neighbor's home.

Prepare your family for a fire:

- **Plan two escape routes.** Choose a spot outside for everyone to meet.
- Practice your escape routes once a month, and during the night.

Space Heaters

Space heaters can be dangerous. Avoid burns and fires:

- Place the space heater on a firm, flat surface where it cannot tip over.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet from curtains, furniture, sheets and blankets, or anything else that can catch fire.
- Keep children away from heaters. Never leave a child alone in a room with a space heater.
- Do not leave a heater running if you leave the room or while you sleep.

Use only UL approved space heaters. Gas ovens and charcoal should not be used for heat — the fumes can cause carbon monoxide poisoning. See page 139. Never use kerosene heaters in a closed space. They are against the law in Massachusetts.



If you need help heating your home, call the Fuel Assistance Program at 1-800-632-8175.

Preventing Choking and Strangulation

Children can choke or strangle very quickly. The best way to prevent choking is to **NEVER** leave small things in their reach. Take a CPR class to be more prepared to respond to a possible choking. Broken or deflated rubber **balloons** are the biggest cause of choking from toys.

Keep your child sitting down and never leave your child alone while eating. Round, hard foods are especially dangerous to children under four. **Hot dogs** should be cut into small pieces, not round slices. **Thickly spread peanut butter** can also cause choking.

Babies and toddlers put everything in their mouths. Keep small things out of reach, such as:

- Jewelry
- Small toys or toy parts
- Buttons
- Coins
- Batteries
- Safety pins
- Paper clips
- Crayon pieces
- Nails, tacks, screws
- Peanuts and other nuts
- Hard candies
- Raw carrots
- Popcorn
- Grapes
- Raisins
- Gum



No-choke tube

A “no-choke” tube or toilet paper roll can be used to check if toy parts are a choking risk for young children. You can buy one at many toy and baby goods stores.

When using a pacifier:

- Be sure the pacifier **nipple has no holes** or tears that might cause it to break off
- Be sure the pacifier shield (the hard plastic part) is large and firm enough to NOT fit in your child’s mouth. Be sure the **shield has holes**.
- **NEVER** tie the pacifier around your baby’s neck with string, ribbon, cord, or yarn—it is dangerous.

Children strangle much more quickly than adults. String, yarn, and ribbon may get caught on something and cause your child to strangle. Remove or cut hood drawstrings from children’s jackets, sweatshirts, and other clothing. Scarves can also cause children to strangle when they are tied around the neck and get caught.

CPR classes teach you how to save your child’s life. CPR is the way to start the heart and lungs after they have stopped. Classes are available at your local YMCA, the American Red Cross, and many health centers.

Preventing Poisoning

Most poisonings happen to children before they turn five years old. Children are likely to be poisoned by swallowing common things in your home, such as cleaners, medicines, vitamins, alcoholic drinks, cigarettes, and house plants.

- **Keep all cleaners, medicines, and other poisons locked and out of reach.**
- Keep cleaners and other poisons in the containers they came in.
- **Use safety latches** on drawers and cupboards.
- Many plants are poisonous. **Keep all plants out of your child's reach.**
- Keep the **Poison Control Center** number by each telephone: **1-800-222-1222.**

If you think your child may have swallowed a poison:

1. **Look in his mouth.** Remove any pills, pieces of plant, or whatever you find.
2. **Do not give your child anything**, not even water or milk, until you call the Poison Control Center.
3. Bring your child and the poison or container to the phone.
4. **Call the Poison Control Center at 1-800-222-1222.** Be prepared to give:
 - your child's age and weight
 - what she swallowed and how much
5. Poison Control will tell you what to do. The Poison Control Center is open 24 hours a day. **Interpreters are available.**
6. Do not call your doctor or nurse until after you call the Poison Control Center.

Traffic Safety



Riding in Cars

Car safety seats and seat belts are the best way to prevent injury and death in cars. Massachusetts has a law that requires all children and adults to buckle up.

The law says:

- Infants and small children must ride in car seats until they are at least five years old AND they weigh over 40 pounds.
- Infants must be in rear-facing car seats until they are 1 year old AND weigh 20 pounds.
- Children who are too big for a car seat will need a booster seat until they are 4 feet 9 inches tall AND weigh 80 pounds. Booster seats lift children so that the seat belt fits right.
- Children who weigh more than 80 pounds must wear a seatbelt that is properly adjusted.
- This law applies to all cars and taxi cabs.

Be sure to wear a seat belt every time you are in the car, too. It will not only keep you safe—it will set a good example for your children. A police officer may stop your car and fine you \$25 for each unrestrained child.

The safest place for any child is in the back seat. Children should never ride in seats where an air bag could open.

For more information about keeping safe in cars, call 1-800-CAR-SAFE.

Walking

Once your child begins to move around, you need to watch him all the time. Young children should only play in fenced areas.

- Teach your child to always **stop** at the curb and **look both ways** before crossing the street.
- Never allow him to walk in the street.
- Make sure there are no children behind your car before you back out of a driveway.

Bicycle and Skating Safety

Biking and skating are fun, but they can also be dangerous. Help your child learn safe riding habits. **Make sure your child wears a helmet every time he rides.** Massachusetts law requires that children under 16 wear helmets when riding a bicycle, in-line skates, a scooter, or a skateboard. Look for ASTM, SNELL, or ANSI stickers on bike helmets to make sure they meet national safety standards. A football helmet or hard hat will not work.

- Children should not ride in the street.
- **Never let your child ride at dusk or after dark.**
- Teach your child to **stop and look both ways** when going across driveways and streets.
- Teach your child to use hand signals when turning.

If you want to take a young child as a passenger on your bike:

- Babies under one year of age should never be carried on a bike. It is against the law.
- Children older than one should ride in rear-mounted bike seats. **Do not let your child ride on handlebars or on the adult bike seat.**
- The bike seat should have spoke guards, a high back, and a sturdy shoulder harness. Attach it securely.
- Children should not be passengers on bicycles when it is dark.
- Your child must, by law, **wear a helmet** —even when riding as a passenger. You should, too!
- To work right a helmet must fit right and be worn right. Read the instructions on the box or ask a local bike dealer.

Water Safety

It only takes seconds for a young child to drown—even in just an inch of water. Drowning happens in all kinds of places, not just pools and beaches. Any open container of water can be dangerous to a baby or young child.

- **Never leave your child alone near water** — a bathtub, toilet, swimming pool, or a bucket of water—**even for a moment.**
- Empty the bathtub, bucket of water, wading pool, or any other water right after using it.
- Keep the bathroom door closed. Keep the toilet lid down.
- If you have a swimming pool, put up a four-sided fence, at least five feet high, with a self-closing, locking gate. If your neighbors have pools, tell them to put up fences and gates.

It is important for all children to learn to swim. Swimming classes are offered at many YMCAs, YWCAs, or local community centers. **Never let your child swim alone.**

Gun Safety

Children in homes with guns are more at risk of being shot by themselves, friends, or family members than of being injured by a robber or other criminal.

If you choose to keep a gun:

- Keep it unloaded and in a locked place.
- Store bullets in a separate locked place.
- Use a trigger lock.

If your child visits or receives child care in someone's home, ask if they have guns in the home. If so, make sure they are stored safely.

Teach your child to never touch a gun. Have her tell an adult right away if she sees one.



Preventing Sports Injuries

To play sports safely, your child needs you to be involved. Talk with the coaches, other parents, and your doctor. Learn the risks of playing the sport. Your child may need a physical exam before she begins to play. Ask the coaches if they have been trained or certified in the sport. A trained coach will:

- Use conditioning, warm-up, and cool down exercises
- Know and play by the rules
- Put players in groups by size instead of by age
- Stop players before they get overtired
- Not allow injured children to play
- Not allow play on dangerous playing fields
- Have an emergency plan

Safety equipment prevents injuries or makes them less serious. Check with coaches about what equipment is required or recommended. Make sure safety equipment fits well. Some examples:

- Mouthguards
- Helmets
- Eye guards
- Face protectors
- Chest protectors
- Shin guards
- Ankle supports
- Foot gear
- Athletic cups
- Kneepads

Prevent emotional stress:

**Encourage your child to do her best.
She should not feel pressure to be the best.**

In Case of a Disaster

Disasters can be natural or caused by other people. A disaster can happen anytime, anywhere, and sometimes without warning. A winter storm could keep your family at home for days. A fire, flood, tornado, terrorist attack, or any other disaster could stop water, electricity, and telephone services. In a large disaster, you may have to leave your home. **Be prepared for a disaster before one happens.**

Find out what disasters could happen. Learn about what types of disasters may happen in your community and how to prepare for them. Speak to your local emergency management director by contacting your local fire or police department, or the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) at 508-820-2000. You can also contact your local American Red Cross chapter by calling 1-800-564-1234.

Keep emergency numbers by phones (911, Poison Control Center, and emergency family contacts). If possible, teach children to dial 911.

Create a family disaster plan. Plan what to do, how to find each other, and how to communicate during a disaster.

- Find the safe places in your home for each kind of disaster.
- Decide the best ways to escape from your home.
- Know your city's or town's emergency plan.
- Decide on two places for your family to meet—right outside your home and outside your neighborhood (a child's school or a public place).

(list continued on next page)

- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact. Then, all your family members will have one place to call.
- Know how to turn off utilities (water, gas, and electricity) at the main switches.
- Make a plan for what to do with your pets if you need to leave your home.
- Talk to your child's babysitters, child care providers, and school about planning for a disaster and your family's plan.

For more information on making a family disaster plan, call the Massachusetts Department of Public Health at 1-866-237-8274.

Make a disaster supplies kit for your child and your family. Keep your kit in a large plastic container, backpack, or dufflebag. Then, if you need to leave your home, you can take your kit with you.

Items to keep in your disaster supplies kit:

- Water—3 gallons for each person in the house
- Non-perishable food—a 3-day supply for each person in the house
- Paper and plastic products (cups, plates, utensils, garbage bags)
- First aid kit
- Medications—prescription and over-the-counter—for you and your family
- Photocopies of prescriptions
- Personal hygiene items (soap, toothbrush, toothpaste)

(list continued on next page)

- Toileting supplies (plastic bucket with a tight lid, toilet paper, bleach)
- Flashlight with extra batteries
- Radio with extra batteries
- Cellular phone with extra battery
- Cash
- Extra clothing, bedding, and towels
- Important phone numbers (including someone you know out-of-state)
- Important documents
- Other tools and supplies (matches, utility knife, can opener, tape)

Special Items for Your Child:

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|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| • Formula | • Diapers |
| • Bottles | • Wipes |
| • Bottled water | • Change of clothing |
| • Baby food | • Toys and games |
| • Powdered milk | • Special blanket or stuffed animal |
| • Snack foods | • Special medications |